



Testimony of Carol Scully
Director of Advocacy, The Arc of Connecticut, Inc.
LCO No. 1325 H.B. 6517 An Act Providing Medicaid Coverage For
Certified, Registered Dietitian-Nutritionist (RDN) Services
Providing Medical Nutrition Therapy

February 14, 2023

Members of the Human Services Committee: Co-Chair Representative Gilchrest, Co-Chair Senator Lessor, Vice Chair Senator Herron Gaston, Vice Chair Representative Lucy Datham, Ranking Member Senator Lisa Seminara, Ranking Member Representative Jay Case, Senator Mahar, Representative Butler, Representative Cook, Representative Comey, Representative Exum, Representative Fortier, Representative Hughes, Representative Johnson, Representative Keitt, Representative Leeper, Representative Santiago, Representative Buckbee, Representative Ferraro, Representative Mastrofrancesco, Representative Pizzuto, Representative Polleta

The Arc Connecticut is the oldest and the largest community-based organization advocating for and with people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) and their families. We work tirelessly to uphold our vision that every individual and family living with I/DD has access to the information, advocacy, and skills they need to support their full inclusion and participation in the community throughout their lifetimes.

We are a chapter of The Arc of The United States, which has 675 chapters in 49 states and over 5,000 service locations. Nationwide, we have approximately 7,000 board members, 124,000 staff, 46,000 volunteers and collectively we serve more than 1 million people with I/DD and their family members.

In Connecticut, our 14 Arc local chapters deliver over \$100 million in jobs, supports and services to thousands of people in 162 communities. Together Arcs are the largest provider of supports and services for people with I/DD and their families in the state, providing about 96% of the services.

The Arc of Connecticut supports H.B. 6517. Nutrition services are essential components of comprehensive care for children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). Nutrition services are essential for those with both IDD and special health care needs as well as persons with disabilities and the elderly.

Persons with IDD have many risk factors requiring nutrition interventions, including growth – failure to thrive, obesity or slowed growth, metabolic disorders, poor feeding skills, drug-nutrient interactions and sometimes partial or total dependence on parental or care giver provided nutrition/feedings. Persons with disabilities are also more likely to develop comorbid conditions including obesity and endocrine disorders that require nutritionist intervention. Nutrition is a health risk factor that include poor eating habits, limited access to services and long-term use of multiple medications.

Nutrition interventions reduce the and cost of comorbidities, complications and risk of being institutionalized. Persons with IDD who do receive nutrition services can live independently or in more inclusive settings of their choice in the community of their choice.

Nutrition services should be provided throughout the persons lifespan in an interdisciplinary, person-centered, community-based and culturally conscious-based manner.

Access to healthcare for persons who are disabled is mandated by the American with Disabilities Act (ADA). Currently, there is a lack of accessible healthcare including providers and medical equipment for persons with disabilities in Connecticut.

The Arc of Connecticut urges legislators to pass this important bill expanding access to healthcare for all who receive Medicaid as their healthcare provider.

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